

The GRANGE

Issue: 78

DECEMBER 1999

Christmas At The Grange

Although the Boultons in the 1830s would not have celebrated Christmas in the lavish fashion of today, they very likely would have entertained guests during the Christmas season. A popular form of entertaining at that time was the evening or late afternoon (after dinner) tea party. In her book, *At Home in Upper Canada*, Jeanne Minhinnick describes such an affair in some detail:

When it was in the height of fashion ... "tea" was a social evening occasion, elaborate and formal. One or two tables were set up on which there were tea urns, tea services, and a coffee pot, cups and saucers and teaspoons. The hostess or other ladies of the household poured tea of two kinds, and coffee. According to Miss Leslie's The House Book, a Manual of Domestic Economy for Town and Country, (Philadelphia, 1840), "large cakes of the best sort" were passed by servants or gentlemen to the ladies who sat on chairs and sofas about the room, or drew up to the various tables ... here was a great deal of walking about and greeting of friends, and a second repast of lemonade, and baskets of "small mixed cakes, macaroons, and kisses" were circulated "less than an hour" after the tea. Afterwards "the blanc mange, jellies, sweetmeats, ice creams, wines and liquors," were handed round. This was a popular method of entertaining from 1820 to the mid-1840s ... and it is a matter of record that refreshments were generally served in three stages and that there was often dancing.

Emily Swift of Amenia, New York, in a letter to a brother in 1829, provides a similar description of a tea party:

Wednesday I had a party of about thirty to tea. Cake dressed with frosting ... preserves and other good things for a tea table. Cake in the middle of the table in the form of a pyramid; three other kinds about the table arranged with all the taste I possess. Tea and coffee Our west room after tea was filled with chairs along the sides, the ladies seated. Dancing commenced This lasted until twelve in the evening.

British slang called such a tea party a "rout" or "drum" because of the noise. The affair could be small and informal but it also could be large and crowded. Christian August Gottlieb Goede in *A Stranger in England* (written 1802-4) writes:

One of the social pleasures of London is a rout ... a colossal caricature of an assembly ... a long range of carriages fills up every avenue, and some times a party cannot get up to the door... Having, however, accomplished this arduous task, on entering the temple of pleasure, nothing is presented to the view but a vast crowd of elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen, many of whom are so over-powered by the heat, noise and confusion, as to be in danger of fainting. Everyone complains of the pressure of the company, yet all rejoice at being so divinely squeezed. The company moves from room to room ...

For our Christmas interpretive display at The Grange, we are attempting to recreate an evening tea party or rout. Following Jeanne Minhinnick's description as closely as possible, the dining room, drawing room and breakfast room are set up to suggest that guests can circulate all over the main floor. Tea things and desserts will be displayed in the dining room and a few refreshments appear on the rising cupboard downstairs. In the breakfast room we will have punch things on the table. Mrs. Minhinnick does not mention it, but punch was also traditionally served at social gatherings.

- Jane Heinemann, The House Committee

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Missing Mona

Our beloved chair of The Grange, Mona Rankin, has been greatly missed over the past few weeks due to an untimely accident resulting in a broken leg. Mona is convalescing at home while Avril Stringer takes her place over the Christmas season as acting chair.

We look forward to seeing Mona next year and wish her a speedy recovery into the new millennium.

The Grange Volunteer Executive 1999-2000

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COMING EVENTS

(For a continuous record, when we want to look back, we will always include events that may actually be over by the delivery date of the newsletter.)

Book Signing

By Air, Land and Sea

By Ruth Vanderlip

Date: Tuesday, November 23, 1998

Time: 2:00 pm

Music Room, The Grange

Grange Volunteer Christmas Party

Carols from the Cathedral

Date: Tuesday, November 30, 1999

Time: 5:00 to 7:00 pm

Music Room, The Grange

January Volunteer Training Supper

Speaker to be announced

Date: Monday, January 17, 2000

Time: 5:30 pm

Music Room, The Grange

February Volunteer Training Supper

Speaker to be announced

Date: Monday, February 14, 1998

Time: 5:30 pm Music Room, The Grange



Hello !

My name is Jenny Lee (also known as Jenny #2) and I'm currently volunteering at The Grange as a co-op student from Thornhill Secondary School. So far, it's been a fabulous experience and I would like to thank Jenny #1 and others for helping me around. While I'm here, I would like to learn about The Grange inside-out, and be familiar with the other side of the Gallery as well Furthermore, I would like to meet more people and have a chance to get to know them better !

Answer from pg 4: *The Grange Veilleuse is on the bedside table in the best bedroom.*

New Policies

Over the summer, I worked with the Co-ordination Department (they do all the AGO events), conservation, building services, and The Grange Council to develop a film policy and a use of premises policy. I will just give you a brief summary of what they contain but both of these are available in my office if you would like to see them.

Movie shoots will be allowed to take place when The Grange is closed. The film company has to abide by the AGO restrictions as well as certain ones I have put in place. Basically, the film company is not allowed to do anything that will hurt the house or the artifacts. This includes lights, dollies, other equipment, the script, food and beverages, etc. Artifacts and artworks will have to be moved before the shoot and returned before we open. There will also be someone present with the authority to close down the shoot if the regulations aren't being followed.

The Co-ordination Department will be responsible for renting The Grange to outside groups. This will be at a premium price as we are a unique site. The only areas available are the music room, front hall and, in certain circumstances, the library. Again I have included strict limitations on candles, flowers, numbers of people allowed and activities. It is rather interesting that we are going back to being an entertainment venue as that was part of the original intention when the house was restored.

One final note, photography is allowed, even with a flash camera, as long as it is a regular camera. If the photographer is a professional with professional equipment, lights and tripods, they must go through me. So, if a tourist with a kodak asks if they can take a photo, please say yes.

- Jenny Rieger

CURATORIAL CORNER !

by Jenny Rieger

I suppose the biggest thing that has happened in The Grange curatorially in the past month, is the modifications to the dining room and to the bedroom. As they will soon be returning to their pristine state, it seems like a good time to reflect on the experience.

When Jane Heinemann approached me about trying this form of interpretation, I was thrilled. My approach to museum displays is to allow the space to tell the visitor a story and this would provide the chance to tell the story of the work that the servants had to do in the house. Jane and I both knew that modifying the room layout this drastically would get a mixed response from some of the volunteers, but with the support of Mona, the Day Captains and the Executive we decided to go ahead. It made sense to only disrupt one bedroom—we could say that the maid had already finished the young girl's room. On the main floor, the breakfast parlour would show the morning meal so it would have to be set up and the drawing room would have been tidied before the family came downstairs.

That left the dining room. The table is unique and the opportunity to display it as an artifact also supported the idea of using this room. Funnily enough, when I think of how easy it is for my own house to get messy, I was surprised to find out how hard it is to deliberately mess up a room—it took the Monday group most of the day! To support the volunteers in interpreting these changes, I prepared a research book using some of the work done by Pleasance Crawford (ex-Granger) and Fiona Lucas (senior domestic interpreter at Heritage Toronto).

The response has been interesting. For some interpreters this has been fun, something different, a new approach to their work. For others, the bedroom was fine, but the dining room was problematic. They missed the beautiful table setting. And, for others still, the whole approach was terrible. The response from the visitors has also been interesting. As we know, many visitors say nothing at all, or merely "what a lovely house." This still occurred. A few visitors disliked what we had

done saying that as they were only here once, they would have like to see the house at its best. However, the majority of visitors who commented liked it. They felt that the house was animated, lived in. They enjoyed the idea of the messy employer leaving everything for the poor house maid!

We never intended to make this a permanent arrangement; but, I would certainly do it again. One of the seminal writers on interpretation, Freeman Tilden, notes that the role of an interpreter is more than merely telling facts about a topic, it is to provoke the visitor into thinking, feeling and reacting to the subject—negative as well as positive reactions. This can be done on a variety of different levels and through a variety of different approaches. Modifying a display is only one way we can do this. We have asked the visitor to think about the life of the servant. We challenged the view of history as being tidy. And, we all learned something about our own reactions to The Grange.

MUFFINS ? OR MUFFINS ?

The question is:

When did muffins cease to be yeast-raised, baked in rings as in English muffins and become baking-powder muffins, baked in muffin tins ?

You will find more than you ever wanted to know, yet not a final unequivocal solution to the muffin mystery in the latest issue of *Food History News*, Vol. XI, No.6

The answer, though not clearly stated as an absolute, would seem to be that muffin tins as we know them today were first patented in the mid-1860s - about the same time as the development of baking powder.

Therefore, we have removed from the 1817 kitchen the tin muffin tins, but have left the cast-iron muffin tins on display as appearing older. This is an interim decision and further enlightenment on the subject could prompt future changes.

Please take time to read the article "Graham Gems and Bran Muffins" in this issue of *Food History News* and let us know your opinions. We would also be interested in any other information that might clarify these dates.

-By Anna Patrick

Labatt Lounge / Library Link Update

Most of you will remember the discussions and proposal to request funding for some major modifications to the Canadian Department. These modifications included re-installing parts of the wing, a new roof for the Canadian galleries, upgrading The Grange air and heating systems etc. It also included a plan to modify the door in the McLaughlin Gallery, re-do the Labatt Lounge and create a link to the Goldwin Smith Library by opening the existing door.

We have subsequently found out that the organization we were going to approach is not, at present, giving out large grants. This has required that the Canadian Department modify the proposal. We have decided to focus on the McLaughlin Gallery and the Lounge only. All the other initiatives have been tabled for another time, or another opportunity. In the meantime, we will continue to build programmatic links between the Canadian galleries and The Grange. In September I had several meetings with Grange volunteers to discuss some ideas and, although we have not yet moved forward on the ideas generated, I intend to continue the discussions in January. As always, I appreciate all your support, suggestions and help.

- Jenny Rieger

REMINDER
Please submit your news
articles for the next
Grange Newsletter by
FEB 4th, 2000.

VEILLEUSE

Did you know that we have a veilleuse in The Grange?

Where is the veilleuse located at The Grange?

(See Answer page 2)

A utilitarian object from another era, the equivalent of today's thermos, the veilleuse was a specialized food-and-drink warmer.

While ceramic food warmers have been made since the first century B.C., the veilleuse became popular in England, France and Germany during the 1750s. The piece was used to serve soups or gruels at the bedside of an invalid or in the nursery. From the French verb *veiller* which means to keep a night vigil or to provide a night lamp, the word *veilleuse* was applied to a food-and-drink warmer that also provided illumination. In England it was often known as a food or pap warmer. (Excerpt from Colonial Homes Magazine, August/September 1999)

Five pieces makeup the basic veilleuse; the warmer bowl, cover, pedestal, burner and the liner. (see illustration). The veilleuse that we have at The Grange has no burner and would have had a candle in the bottom of the pedestal. The Georgian House in Edinburgh, Scotland has a veilleuse by the fireplace in the dining room. There it is called a "whiskey warmer" and the punch bowl stands at the ready beside it. Around 1800 was often replaced by a teapot and the veilleuse became a highly decorated item to be seen in the drawing room.

Coloured illustrations of some extremely elegant veilleuses are shown in the August/September 1999 issue of *Colonial Home*. Unfortunately, they cannot be re-produced here but can be seen in the Research Books.

- Enid Martin, Research

Comments from Arnold Haultain

(Goldwin Smith's secretary and literary executor)

On lunch at The Grange:
October 17, 1889 4:36 p.m.

"Just home from work. Lunched at The Grange. Their luncheons do not suit me, -And no wonder. The Professor helps himself to rice-blanc-mange or "punkin pie" - the latter one of his pet dishes; they grow pumpkins on purpose for him. This he washes down with a cup of tea: and his lunch is over-time, about seven minutes. I make as much haste as a very good appetite can, and always by eight minutes to two at the very most we are back at our respective desks." (pg.38)

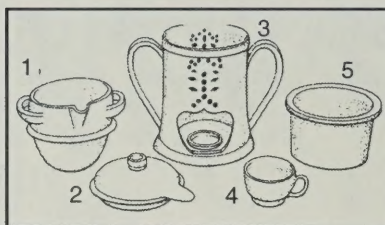
On Mr Chin:

The butler - a most lovable and intelligent old Englishman - had been in the house for more that half a century. Chin (this was his name) was another great man in his way as was his master in another. Had Chin's devotion, uprightness, conscientiousness, tact and intelligence been, for this half century, expended on another - say on a political or public - plain, he would have been as famous as is he whom he served. All visitors to The Grange retained an affectionate admiration of Chin." (pg. 179)

Goldwin Smith - His Life and Opinions Arnold Haultain, McClelland & Goodchild Ltd, Toronto.

P.S. This book is well worth reading for interesting, often amusing insights into the very complex man that was Goldwin Smith.

-Avril Stringer, Research



The Veilleuse as a food warmer includes:

1. warmer bowl; 2. the bowl cover with a top knob that also is a candleholder; 3. the pedestal with an opening for the 4. burner, which holds the wick & oil; 5. the liner, which is filled with water, receives the bowl & sits atop the pedestal.

In keeping with the Christmas theme, suggested reading:

At Home in Upper Canada,

Jeanne Minnhinnick

The Festive Tradition. Table

Decoration and Desserts in

America, 1650-1900, Louise

Conway Belden

Life in the Georgian City,

Dan Cruikshank and Neil Burton

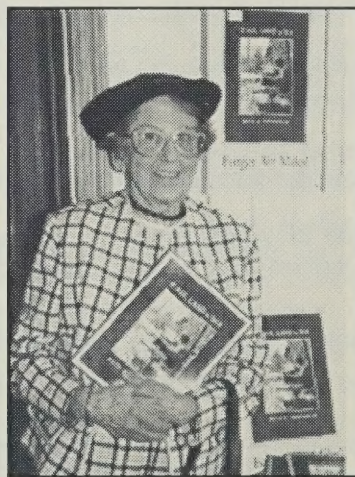
Author in our midst . . .

Ruth Vanderlip, Volunteer - The Grange Research

Ruth E. Vanderlip who has written the entertaining book *By Air Land and Sea*, was born in Brantford Township and in her early years attended a one room country school located on the Paris Road. Her high school education was at the Brantford Collegiate Institute, after which she attended the University of Toronto, to be graduated after four years with an Honours BA in English. Straightaway, she attended the Ontario College of Education to qualify as a teacher. Her training as a librarian came after a few years, when, on a year's leave from teaching, she became a student at the U of T School of Library Science to add "librarian" to her qualifications All of this before the day of PM Harris of Ontario, who would have likely told our Miss Ruth not to bother, because he was about to declare in effect, that School Libraries and Librarians were for the birds! However, Miss Ruth was lucky in her timing, and in blissful ignorance of the future, Mr H. and the birds!

So it was, indeed, she was employed as a secondary school teacher-librarian by the Scarborough Board of Education that she had a special leave for travel and went around the world, making her trip especially

memorable by working as a volunteer for short periods in small college libraries in Bangalore, South India; Sibiu, Sarawak, Borneo and Manila in the Phillippines. She had the opportunity at such times to become familiar with the distinctive features of the everyday life of the countries; the constant heat, the sacred cows and monkeys, the tree-trunk staircases and no less - the cycle-ricks, the motor-ricks, the jeepneys, the long-boats and the varying other forms of local transit, with which Ruth had to become quickly acquainted! *By Air Land and Sea* is a fascinating account of travel, and volunteer work in far-away places.



1858 was an eventful year in Toronto. In April of that year what had been known as the "peninsula" became the "island" when a violent storm eliminated a sandbar and created the "Eastern Gap".

Also that year, the "Fall Fair" was held for the first time in a permanent building. Called the "Palace of Industry or the Crystal Palace", the building, which was constructed in less than three months, was 256 feet by 96 feet. (*The Romance of Canadian Cities Series*, Bruce West) The exhibition catalogue listed coal oil lamps, and a new rat-trap "... well calculated to deceive the most wary of those very troublesome customers".

There was also a "night spot" where a smoke or a drink and a floor show (Negro minstrels) could be had for twelve and a half cents.

-Avril Stringer, Research